

A Study of English Writing Proficiency of Business and Technical Students in Tertiary Level

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were 1) to study English writing proficiency of business and technical students in tertiary level, 2) to business and technical students' English writing achievement before and after writing activities, and 3) to investigate business and technical students' satisfaction with this type of instruction.

The subjects were 40 business and technical students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology during second semester of 2016 academic year which derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used in this experiment were the pre-post English writing test, the writing lesson plans, the English writing ability evaluation form and the questionnaire on students' satisfaction towards writing learning.

The experimental process and data collection were conducted as follows: The subjects were given an English writing ability pretest. Then, the four lesson plans were used in second semester. After the completion of each lesson, the English writing ability evaluation form, and the satisfaction questionnaire were used for surveying the subjects' satisfaction with writing method. The data were statistically analyzed by mean scores, standard deviation, percentage and t-test for dependent samples.

The results were as follows;

1. English writing ability of business and technical students was at good level.
2. The students' writing achievement after learning was significantly higher than before, with instruction constructed at 0.01 level.
3. The students' satisfaction towards writing activities was at high level.

Keywords: *English Writing Proficiency, Business and Technical Students*

Introduction

Writing is an extreme important skill in the curriculum at any time of the learning or assessment period. In a research on student writing at university level, Fukao & Fujii (2001) stipulated that writing is very important in determining the success of mastering the curriculum since writing can demonstrate the extent of a student's learning progress. As for language instructors, a student's writing will assist to determine how much comprehension of the course content has occurred upon completion of a particular course.

In universities, students need to prepare and submit written assignments, critical reviews, term papers, essays, and theses as part of their academic assignments to fulfill their course requirements. Apart from the course requirements in learning institutions, Zamel (1998) advocates that writing has the ability to enhance learning in a particular discipline. Moreover, writing can help students to acquire content knowledge and in the course of analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and making inferences, students are actually developing their cognitive skills.

Furthermore, Petric and Czár (2003) advocated that there are three stages in writing involving pre-writing, while writing and post-writing. These three stages of the writing process are interconnected and they may overlap and may occur repeatedly without any fixed sequence or order. Hence, many theorists (Manchón and Roca de Larios, 2007; Cohen, 1998) stipulated that L2 students need to use various techniques and strategies as required at each

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stage of the writing process. In this respect, Petric and Czár (2003) believed that the writing process as actions or behaviors intentionally carried out by writers using their own strategies to produce good writing.

In conclusion, researcher studied proficiency in English writing skill of business and technical students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in second semester of 2016 academic year. The results derived from this research will provide guidelines for improvement and development of instruction for further course.

Research Purposes

- 1) To study English writing proficiency of business and technical students in tertiary level,
- 2) To business and technical students' English writing achievement before and after writing activities, and
- 3) To investigate business and technical students' satisfaction with this type of instruction

Research Deign

The data was gathered and analyzed as follows:

1. Population and Samples

1.1 The population is business and technical students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in second semester of 2016 academic year. There were 1,200 students from Faculty of Business Administration and Faculty of Information Technology.

1.2 The samples consisted of 40 students derived from a simple random sampling technique.

Duration in Experiment

The experiment ran for 10 weeks (20 hours)

Contents used in this experiment

Contents used in this experiment consisted of 4 topics which derived through students needs as follows:

1. How has technology changed your life?
2. What is your dream job? Why?
3. How do Thai learners acquire a new language?
4. What is your bad experience? Why?

Variables

Variables in this study were as follows:

1. The English writing ability of business and technical students before and after the class.
2. The satisfaction of business and technical students towards English writing course.

Research Instruments

1. The pre-post English writing test
2. The four writing lesson plans
3. The English writing ability evaluation form
4. The satisfaction questionnaire

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using computer program. The t-test was employed to compare the subjects' English writing achievement before and after English writing course.

The mean and standard deviations of scores from English writing evaluation form, the satisfaction questionnaire were used to measure at the end of the course.

Data Collection

The experimental process and data collection were conducted as follows: The subjects were given an English writing ability pretest. Then, the four lesson plans were used in second semester. After the completion of each lesson, the English writing ability evaluation form, and the satisfaction questionnaire were used for surveying the subjects' satisfaction with writing method. The data were statistically analyzed by mean scores, standard deviation, percentage and t-test for dependent samples.

Research Results

1. Results of English writing ability analyzing of business and technical students which derived through task assessment in each learning plan in 4 times

Table 1: Mean scores of English writing ability of TNI Students from 1st-4th time

No.	Writing Task 1-4				total (200 scores)	(\bar{x}) (50 scores)	(S.D.)
	1 (50 scores)	2 (50 scores)	3 (50 scores)	4 (50 scores)			
1	43	47	48	47	185	46.25	2.21
2	43	45	42	43	173	43.25	1.25
3	40	43	43	44	170	42.5	1.73
4	43	48	49	43	183	45.75	3.20
5	43	45	42	43	173	43.25	1.25
6	43	44	49	43	179	44.75	2.87
7	49	46	47	49	191	47.75	1.50
8	48	49	41	48	186	46.50	3.69
9	43	45	44	41	173	43.25	1.70
10	44	47	44	48	183	45.75	2.06
11	46	42	45	49	182	45.50	2.88
12	42	42	43	43	170	42.50	0.57
13	44	43	43	49	179	44.75	2.87
14	40	43	43	44	170	42.50	1.73
15	45	43	40	48	176	44.00	3.36
16	43	49	43	45	180	45.00	2.82
17	42	46	44	47	179	44.75	2.21
18	44	49	44	42	179	44.75	2.98
19	43	46	43	48	180	45.00	2.44
20	46	45	42	45	178	44.50	1.73
21	47	44	48	42	181	45.25	2.75
22	45	46	49	42	182	45.50	2.88
23	41	48	44	42	175	43.75	3.09
24	39	42	46	46	173	43.25	3.40
25	41	43	42	47	173	43.25	2.62
26	44	45	40	46	175	43.75	2.62
27	44	45	49	43	181	45.25	2.62
28	45	46	48	49	188	47.00	1.82

29	43	41	41	45	170	42.50	1.91
30	43	47	48	47	185	46.25	2.21
31	43	45	42	43	173	43.25	1.25
32	40	43	43	44	170	42.50	1.73
33	43	48	49	43	183	45.75	3.20
34	43	45	42	43	173	43.25	1.25
35	43	44	49	43	179	44.75	2.87
36	49	46	47	49	191	47.75	1.50
37	46	41	44	46	177	44.25	2.36
38	49	48	44	49	190	47.50	2.38
39	46	49	41	46	182	45.50	3.31
40	43	45	42	43	173	43.25	1.25
Total	43.77	45.20	44.42	45.17	7,143	44.65	2.30
%	87.54	90.40	88.84	90.34	89.28	89.28	

The assessment of English writing ability of **business and technical students**, the researcher used English writing test in each unit which assessed continuously every unit of learning. Therefore, percentage of scores was calculated from criteria as following; (adapted from Thaweerat, 2000; Wongsothorn, 1995)

81-100 means very high

61-80 means high

41-60 means moderate

21-40 means low

1-20 means very low

The table showed that the unit test scores of business and technical students in the total were at 7,143 out of 8,000 scores which calculated to be percentage at 89.28% out of 100%. This meant that business and technical students had English writing ability at very high level. However, when considered in each unit, it was found that business and technical students got the highest scores from unit 2 (90.40%) and unit 4 (90.34%) respectively.

2. Results of analyze pretest and posttest scores of English writing ability test of business and technical students

The researcher used English writing ability test (2 items: 100 scores) to experiment students' ability both pretest and posttest after learning. Then pretest and posttest scores were compared as following table:

Table 2: Comparison of pretest and posttest mean scores in English writing ability of business and technical students

English writing ability scores	n	\bar{x}	S.D.	t	Sig.
Pretest	40	41.56	5.74	33.548	0.000**
Posttest	40	82.73	4.38	92.348	

** Statistically significant differences at .01 level

The table showed that English writing ability of business and technical students after the class was higher than before at .01 level. The mean scores of pretest were at 41.56 and mean scores of posttest were at 82.73. It demonstrated that teaching-learning about writing class was able to enhance students' writing ability.

3. Result of satisfaction with teaching English writing of business and technical students after the course

Table 7: result of satisfaction of business and technical students after the course

Statement	Level of satisfaction		meaning
	\bar{x}	S.D.	
1. Students can remember vocabulary, idioms, and grammar in each unit because they can learn by doing.	4.28	0.72	high
2. Students can practice writing skill from task activities of each unit.	4.59*	0.86	highest
3. Students exchange knowledge with different major friends and take information to apply in teachers' assignments.	4.48	0.92	high
4. Students study how to search information and desired learning sources and apply in their assignments.	4.41	0.63	high
5. Students have participation in sharing ideas and opinions among groups in order to plan assigned tasks effectively.	4.43	0.77	high
6. Students have freedom in planning their own tasks with participation of teachers.	4.53	0.72	highest
7. Students learn their mistakes from task activities and self-assessment in learning log.	4.31	0.73	high
8. Contents that students study can apply in learning in higher education.	4.58*	0.81	highest
9. Activities in each unit support students to use critical thinking and language style analysis including concluding structures and language usage.	4.47	0.69	high
10. Students can do assigned tasks without seriousness about errors and the blaming from teachers.	4.52	0.72	highest
Total of mean scores	4.46	0.76	High

The table showed that mean scores of satisfaction towards English writing teaching of business and technical students in overall were at high level (\bar{x} =4.46), when considered in each statement , it was found that the highest rank of satisfaction was from item 2 *students can practice writing skill from task activities of each unit* (\bar{x} =4.59) and item 8 *Contents that students study can apply in learning in higher education* (\bar{x} =4.58), item 6. *Students have freedom in planning their own tasks with participation of teachers* (\bar{x} =4.53), and item 10 *Students can do assigned tasks without seriousness about errors and the blaming from teachers* (\bar{x} =4.52) respectively.

Conclusion

1. English writing ability of business and technical students was at good level.
2. The students' writing achievement after learning was significantly higher than before, with instruction constructed at 0.01 level.
3. The students' satisfaction towards writing activities was at high level.

Discussion

1. According to results of English writing ability of business and technical students was at good level. It might be because the students understood how to write in target language and focused on sets of language elementary such as grammar vocabulary and communication skills which related to the notion of Cummins (1980) who advocated that proficiency is an individual's general level of ability to understand and write in the target language while remaining conscious of the relations and combination of numerous sets of language elements such as grammar, vocabulary and sociolinguistic and communicative skills with the objective of achieving accurate communication.

2. The students' writing achievement after the course was significantly higher than before, with instruction constructed at 0.01 level. This might be because the samples used three stages in writing involving pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing. These three stages of the writing process are interconnected and they used various techniques and strategies as required at each stage of the writing process (Cohen, 1998).

3. The students had a high level of satisfaction towards English writing ability instruction. This might be because the students satisfied with English writing lessons and writing tasks which focused on writing activities, proficiency and communication in writing English which related to the idea of Lea and Strierer (2000) who stipulated that Proficiency in language is assumed as a key to successful communication. Moreover, language will successfully assist people in diverse activities, which involve communication, various types of dealings, or even writing. Therefore, TNI students preferred this teaching method at high level.

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Bio Data

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